

Fruit bat hunting also harms humans

May 28 2019



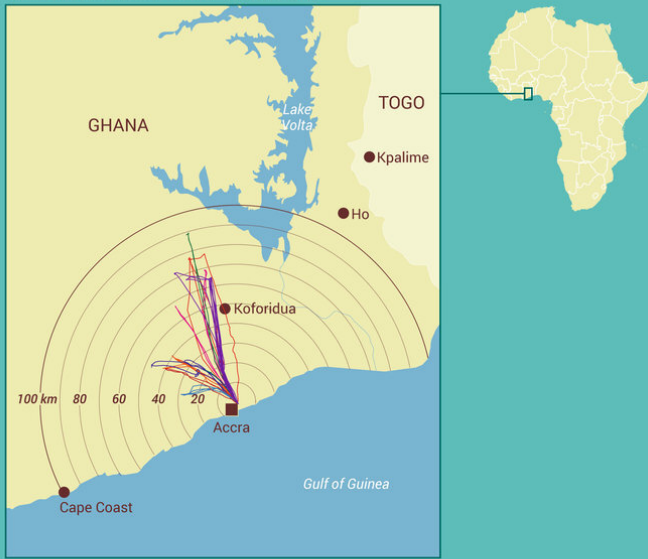
Straw-coloured fruit bats love fruits above everything, for example date palms and mangos – or, as in this case, sugar plums c). However, they do not eat the whole fruit, but press out the juice and spit out the pulp. The nectar of Baobab trees is also on their menu. Credit: MPI f. Ornithology/ Ziegler

According to the report of the World Biodiversity Council IPBES 2019 on the global state of biodiversity, one million animal and plant species

are acutely threatened with extinction. In addition, the overexploitation of the last 50 years has led to a massive decline in the performance of many ecosystems. One example of this is the ecological services of flying foxes in Africa, which are affected by the hunting of animals. Scientists at the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology in Radolfzell have calculated the financial value of a colony of palm fruit bats in Ghana for local people.

Animals not only pollinate crops, they also contribute to the spread of plant seeds. For example, flying foxes, which belong to the group of bats, eat fruit from trees and swallow the seeds they contain. On their nocturnal flights from the back to their sleeping tree, the animals excrete the seeds again. Unfortunately, hundreds of thousands of [animals](#) are still killed every year—with unforeseeable consequences for the biodiversity in African forests.

Nocturnal routes of fruit bats



Population in Ghana
minimum 2.5 million



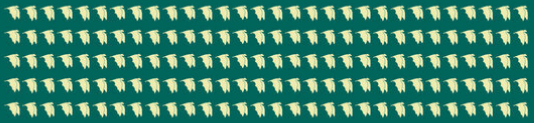
Hunted per year up to
1.5 million animals



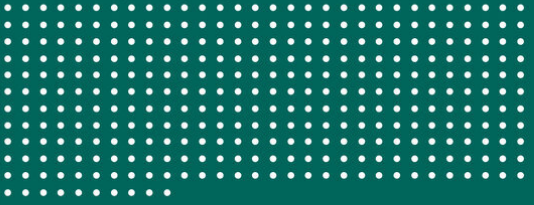
Fruit bats and their cargo

Maximum distribution area: 13,000 km²

Colony size: 150,000 animals



Number of seeds per colony per night: 340,000



Through the dispersal of seeds, 800 hectares of new forest are created every year. This corresponds to about 1120 football pitches.

Animal seed couriers



Credit: MPG

Provided by Max Planck Society

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